THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. ANBUMANI RAMADOSS): (a) As per the World Health Organization estimates, out of total 37 million blind persons (Visual Acuity <3/60) in the world, 6.7 million are in India which is one-fifth of the total global blind population.

(b) As per the Eye Bank Association of India, Hyderabad, there are 500 Eye Banks/Eye Donation Centres in the country including 148 in Maharashtra. Around 30,000 donated eyes are collected annually in the country.

(c) There are about 6000 Optometrists in India and about 1200 pass out every year. More Optometrists are needed to fulfill patients' requirements for eye care in the country as the Ophthalmologists—para medical personnel ratio should be 1:4.

(d) As per the survey conducted during 2006-07, the prevalence of Blindness in the country has come down to 1% as compared to 1.1% during the year 2001-02.

The National Programme for Control of Blindness (NPCB) is committed to reduce the burden of avoidable blindness to 0.3% by the year 2020.

The following steps have been taken under NPCB to achieve the targets and for effective implementation of the programme:—

1. Setting up of State Blindness Control Societies and District Blindness Control Societies in States/UTs.
2. Providing Eye care facilities to the needy people at Primary, Secondary and Tertiary levels through Primary Health Centres, District Hospitals, Medical Colleges and Regional Institutes of Ophthalmology.
3. Strengthening of Eye Banks in Government/Voluntary Sector.
4. Financial support to NGOs for strengthening their existing infrastructure for Eye care and providing recurring grant for Cataract surgery, School Eye Screening and Eye Donation.
5. Organizing Eye Donation Fortnight from 25th August to 8th September every year to promote eye donation.
6. Screening of School Children for detection of refractive errors and providing free spectacles to poor children.
7. Strengthening of Regional Institutes of Ophthalmology/eye departments of Medical Colleges by providing assistance for development of paediatric eye units/low vision units/ retina units and training infrastructure.
8. Imparting training to Ophthalmic Surgeons from Government Hospitals/Medical Colleges for quality eye care.
9. Intensification of IEC activities to create awareness about eye care activities.

Shortage of wheat

*125. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA:
SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) what would be the expected shortfall of wheat for the next three years; and

(b) what is the plan of Government to meet the shortage?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) and (b) Table below presents the projected production and demand of wheat for the crop 2007-08, 2008-09 and 2009-10 and the likely shortfall during the latter two years:

(Million Tonnes)

Crop Year	Projected Production	Projected Demand	Projected Shortfall
2007-08	71.78	71.19	0.59
2008-09	72.60	72.72	-0.12
2009-10	73.44	74.26	-0.82

However, the production of wheat during crop year 2006-07, to be consumed during 2007-08, is estimated to be 74.89 million tonnes (4th advance estimates) and to this extent the availability for the year 2007-08 has increased as against the projected production for this year.

An Integrated, Cereals Development Programme is wheat based cropping systems has been under implementation since October 2000 to promote production of wheat. The scheme which was subsumed under macro management mode of agriculture, provided flexibility to the States based on local needs. However, in order to increase the production of wheat further, recently a Centrally Sponsored Scheme "National Food Security Mission" (NFSM) has also been launched in the country from 2007-08. It aims at increasing the production of wheat by 8 million tonnes by the end of the Eleventh Plan, *i.e.*, by 2011-12 through area increase and productivity enhancement in targeted districts.

Ayurvedic doctors engaged in research work

*126. SHRI VARINDER SINGH BAJWA: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Ayurvedic doctors and others in the employment of Central Government who are engaged in research and for the promotion of the system, category-wise and grade-wise;

(b) the Central budget for research and promotion of Ayurveda and the actual utilization thereof for the last three years ending 31st March, 2007; and

(c) the sanctioned budget for the purpose for the year 2007-08?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. ANBUMANI RAMADOSS): (a) The category-wise number of Ayurvedic doctors and others engaged in research and promotion of the system in the employment of Central Government and its autonomous bodies namely Central Council of Research in Ayurveda & Siddha, New Delhi, National Institute of Ayurveda, Jaipur, National Institute of Siddha, Chennai and Institute of Post Graduate Training and Research in Ayurveda, Jamnagar, is enclosed as Statement-I (*See* below).

(b) and (c) The allocation of funds for research and promotion of Ayurveda and Siddha and their utilizaton for the last three years and the budget allocation for 2007-08 given as